

AN UPDATED FRAMEWORK OF ESP PROGRAM EVALUATION

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Abstract: though considered as important, ESP program evaluation remains the “roads less taken” stage compared to need analysis. Whereas, program evaluation is needed to measure the effectiveness of the current program as well as to plan a revised program which better fulfill related stakeholders’ need. This paper describes a newly updated ESP program evaluation framework by Tsou and Chen (2014) which covers comprehensive elements involved in the ESP program. This framework combines the established Hutchinson and Waters’ (1987) model and the Watanabe, Norris, and Gonzalez-Lloret’s (2009) model. These two models were widely accepted by ESP scholars in conducting ESP program evaluation. Additionally, this framework adds authenticity, learner autonomy and learning transfer. This newly updated framework will contribute significantly to ESP program coordinators/ experts/ teachers to measure whether their goals of ESP program have been met and to ensure their program’s continuous improvement.

Keywords: *program evaluation, ESP, Tsou*

ESP Program Evaluation: What For?

A big number of references has been discussing about various approaches in ESP needs analysis such as Hutchinson & Waters (1987), Benesch (1996), Purpura & King (2004), Long (2005), Belcher (2006), Kawpet (2008). This emphasizes that needs analysis is the prominent phase to be conducted in succeeding as ESP program. It aims at facilitating the needs of interested parties involving in the program, such as: sponsors, learners, teachers, and curriculum developers. In line with this, ESP pedagogy places heavy demands on its practitioners to collect empirical needs-assessment data, to create or adapt materials to meet specific needs identified, and to cope with often unfamiliar subject matter and even language use....”. Belcher (2004: p. 166). Though these needs analysis studies involves a comprehensive exploration on the needs of interested parties, the framework used was still output-oriented where formative assessment became the significant determinant.

As the language program evaluation focuses more on the formative assessment, McKay (1991) and Richards (1997) initiate approach of evaluation by involving participants as active contributors. Later, Lynch (2003) includes the importance of values and ethical concerns in program evaluation approaches, with an emphasis on expanding the range of program stakeholders in the evaluation process. She distinguishes three levels of potential stakeholders, ranging from day-to-day participants, to those who might have a limited interest in long-term program outcomes. Kiely and Rea-Dickins (2005) acknowledge that different stakeholder constituencies may prioritize evaluation criteria in conflicting orders of importance, and may value various possible outcomes differently.

Ross (2009: p. 764) later articulates the relationship among these needs into the following scheme. It implies that there should be a move beyond the formative assessment to meet these various needs and demands of related stakeholders.

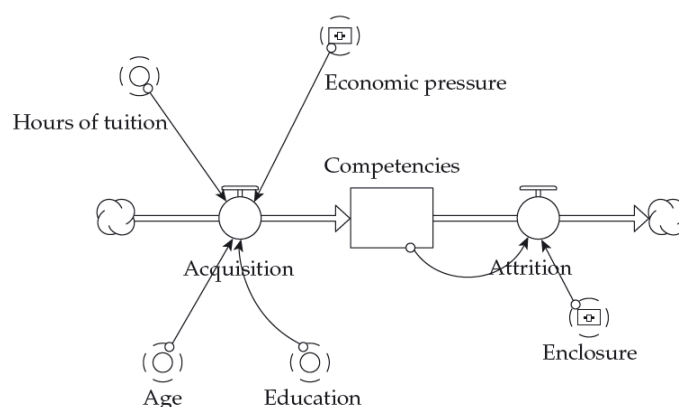


Figure 1. Logic model with social and economic factors (Ross, 2009: p. 764)

These various needs imply in the specific language use in ESP as Douglas (2013:377) discusses about the language assessment of ESP which is based on the analysis of a target language use situation and reflective communicative needs of specific groups of learners.

However, while recent studies emphasize the importance of need analysis and language use in ESP, a view on the program evaluation of ESP has not yet been carried out intensively. Meanwhile, needs analysis should be reexamined by program evaluation as an audit phase to examine the success and the failure of the program. Thus, this paper examines the development of ESP program evaluation framework, from the most dated one to the most recent one.

The Development of ESP Program Evaluation Framework

Though there are numerous references on the ESP program evaluation framework, the author selects three frameworks as the focus in a way that these three frameworks have been widely used in ESP program evaluation.

a) Hutchinson & Water's (1987) Framework

Hutchinson & Water mention two levels of evaluation, namely course evaluation and learner assessment (1987: p.144). Course evaluation underpins the importance of collected data in order to understand how the learning need is addressed. While the learner assessment suggests some tests conducted for the learners, for example placement test, development test, proficiency test, et cetera. Further, they classify the evaluation into four main aspects of evaluation based on Alderson & Waters (1983) criteria:

1. What should be evaluated?
2. How can ESP courses be evaluated?
3. Who should be involved in the evaluation?
4. When (and how often) should evaluation take place?

In short, this table shows the model of ESP course evaluation by Hutchinson and Waters (1987: p. 152-155).

Table 1. Framework of ESP Evaluation by Hutchinson and Waters

Aspects of Evaluation	Explanation/ questions
1. What should be evaluated?	The overall aim of the ESP course in meeting two main needs of learners: a) Their needs as language learners b) Their needs as language users
2. How can ESP courses be evaluated?	Evaluation can be done in some ways such as: a) Test results b) Questionnaires c) Discussion d) Interviews e) Informal means (unsolicited comments, casual chats etc.)
3. Who should be involved in the evaluation?	ESP teaching institution ESP teachers Learners sponsors
4. When (and how often) should evaluation take place?	In the first week of the course At regular intervals throughout the course, for example every half term. At the end of the course. After the course.

b) Kawpet (2008) Framework

Kawpet (2008) in his need assessment on an ESP program in Thailand constructs a framework covering a whole process of needs analysis to curriculum development, where program evaluation is also included. By using six principles for analyzing learner needs, such as: 1) giving priority to communication needs, 2) giving equal importance to learning needs, 3) taking 'context' into account, 4) inviting multiple perspectives, 5) employing multiple data collection methods, and 6) treating need analysis as ongoing activity.

In his framework, stakeholders such as: employers, lecturers, former students, researcher and the current students are investigated to express their needs of ESP. This is conducted by individual interviews. From this needs assessment, the communication needs and learning needs are then formulated into the curriculum (syllabus and materials). During the implementation of the formulated curriculum, English instructor, current students, and an observer observe the process of teaching and learning periodically. Finally, in the evaluation stage, the

communication and the learning needs (formulated in the initial stage) are reevaluated. This is conducted through observation, collection of students' work samples, focus group interviews, evaluation of instructional materials. Observation is also conducted by an observer (non-instructor), current students, a researcher, and a curriculum specialist.

The scheme of Kawpet's framework is shown below.

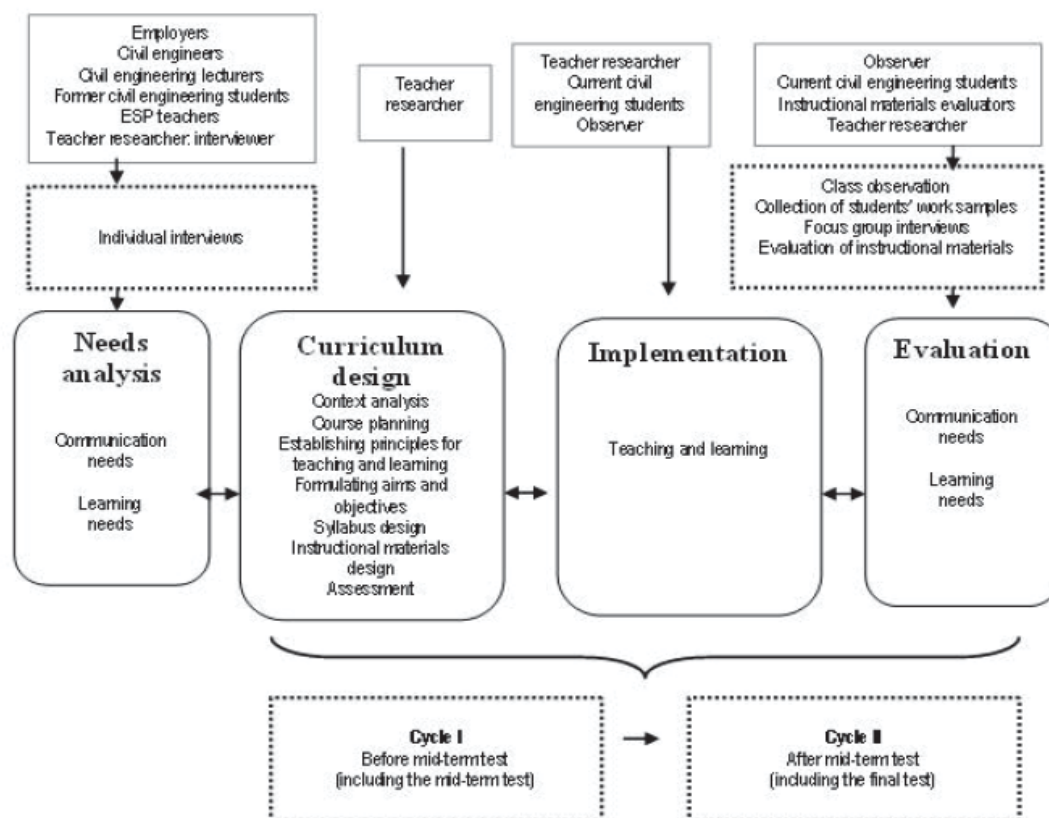


Figure 2. Framework of ESP Program Evaluation (Kawpet, 2009:216)

c) Watanabe, Norris, and Gonzales-Lloret's (2009) Framework

Watanabe et., al. in their Foreign Language (FL) program evaluation involves stakeholders' need analysis such as: policy makers, program designers, community members (the public and the parents), sponsors, instructors, and students. This framework applies participatory model, professional accountability, and teacher empowerment.

A newly modified framework for ESP program evaluation

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) framework provides an excellent starting point for the principals for ESP evaluation where multiple parties (stakeholders) are involved in assessing the program. However, the constructed framework was not detailed and the criteria of assessment were not articulated well enough. This may emerge various interpretations of the researchers who apply the framework as well as various instruments used.

Similarly, Kawpet's (2009) framework contributes to the multi-parties involvement in monitoring the ESP program that leads to curriculum development. However, there were no suggested instruments for the future researchers to follow. Next, though Watanabe contributes to the new insights on the positive aspects of evaluation that is a shift of view from an externally mandated process to an internally motivated one, there are some missed aspects in this evaluation framework. To name some, authenticity, learner autonomy, and learning transfer.

This newly suggested framework is initiated by considering the stakeholders' goals (as what in needs analysis process). It adds the previous frameworks by providing clear scheme of ESP assessment. The first two categories (course evaluation, learner assessment) are similar to Hutchinson and Water's (1987) criteria, while the third criteria (teacher participation and empowerment) is taken from Watanabe, Norris & Gonzalez-Lloret (2009)'s framework. The scheme is presented below.

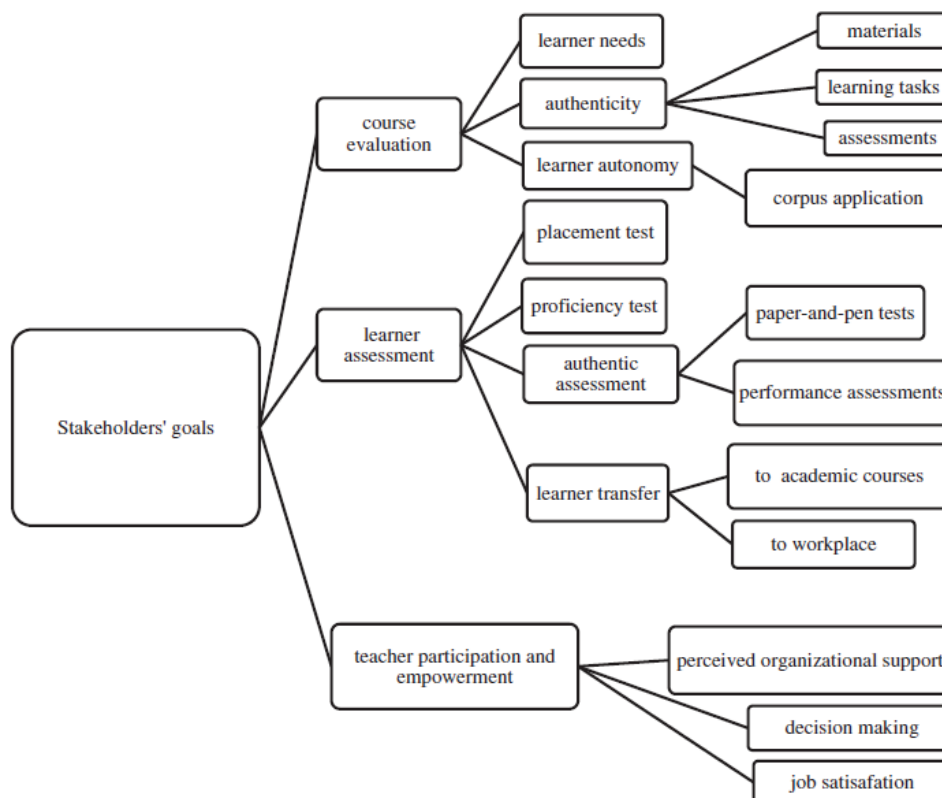


Figure 3. The Updated Framework for ESP Program Evaluation

The scheme is explained as follow:

- a. **Stakeholder analysis** is conducted as the preliminary need analysis stage where all the related stakeholders of an ESP programs were asked about their needs of English. It may involve the students, the English teachers, curriculum developers, senior management of the faculties, sponsors, workplaces, and such. This kind of analysis can be conducted through survey (questionnaire) and interview. This evaluation is to determine the value of the program and the effectiveness of the instruction and to identify adjustment to be made in curriculum design and instruction.
- b. **Course evaluation** deals with three basic questions: 1) have the learners' needs are fulfilled?, 2) are the materials are authentic?, 3) has the course fostered the learners' autonomy. This is conducted by perception survey and achievement survey (for students), and the teacher questionnaire.
- c. **Learner assessment** covers similar aspects as Hutchinson and Water (1987) propose, namely: placement test, proficiency test, achievement test, and learning transfer. The achievement assessment is evaluated its authenticity in a way that authentic materials and actual target situations of tasks are met. Authentic tasks, such as giving business presentation or making a short news video are some of examples of authentic assessment. Meanwhile, learning transfer deals with the application of knowledge in the specific context (such as in classroom context during the learning) and a wider context (at the workplace). To meet these criteria, achievement survey, standardized test (such as: TOEFL or TOEIC), and teacher questionnaire are used.
- d. **Teacher participations** can be conducted in three perspectives: perceived organizational support, decision making, and job satisfaction (Scherie, 2002). In this criterion, teachers are asked their awareness of the organizational aims, organizational support, and organizational decision/ rules regarding their aims. This criteria can be evaluated through teacher surveys and interviews.

This framework applies some instruments in collecting program evaluation data, provided in the following table.

Table 2. Instruments in Tsou & Chen's Framework (2014:44)

Evaluation categories	Assessment items	Tools
Course evaluation	Learners needs	Perception survey
	Authenticity	Achievement survey
		Teacher questionnaire
	Learner autonomy	Achievement survey
		Perception survey
		Teacher questionnaire
Learner assessment	Placement	Achievement survey
		Teacher questionnaire
	Proficiency	TOEIC
		Achievement survey
	Authentic assessment	Achievement survey
		Teacher questionnaire
Teacher participation/ empowerment	Learner transfer	Achievement survey
	Participation/ empowerment	Meeting minutes
		Teacher questionnaire
		Teacher articles

This framework has been successfully trialed at an ESP program at a Taiwanese national university and produced beneficial input for the ESP program either from the side of ESP teachers, students, and the other stakeholders (Tsou & Chen, 2014).

There are also some strengths and weaknesses of this framework. These strength and weaknesses are presented as follow.

Strength	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It adds the points of authenticity, learner autonomy, and learning transfer which are not being discussed in the previous researches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take comprehensive data by using all instruments, it takes much time and a lot of resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It adds the teachers' participation and empowerment which is less discussed previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection regarding the graduated students are quite impractical as they are hard to reach.

Conclusion

The new updated framework proposes a comprehensive approach to ESP program evaluation, which is based on the earlier studies and emerging research topics on ESP. Besides emphasizing the courses and assessing student performance, this new framework also facilitates authenticity, learner autonomy, learning transfer, and teacher participation and performance. Applying multiple data sources, this framework aims to be comprehensible.

Having presented three different frameworks for ESP program evaluation, the author suggests that the updated framework is a good framework for a longitudinal study of ESP program evaluation. Reviewing that there are some data collection methods to conduct, this framework necessitates quite long time to finish. Surely, the future studies which about to use this framework need to plan everything ahead in time, as it may need 3-5 years for a complete phase.

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Biodata

Silvia Arnis is currently an English lecturer at Faculty of Da'wa and Communication, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Her major in English Education supports her to design ESP materials for Journalism students in the faculty she is currently working. She is also involved as a member of test developer team for ETIS (English Test for Islamic Students) as the entrance test for prospective UIN/IAIN students. Her research interests include culture in EFL materials, material design, ESP, and English for Young Learners. She is also a novice writer for international journal articles (under review). She can be contacted by email at: arnis@uinjkt.ac.id

Appendix 1 Perception Survey (Tsou, W. & Chen, F., 2014 : 45)

State your opinion towards these statements by using 1-5 scale. 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (not sure), 4 (agree), or 5 (strongly agree).

1. The course objectives match the themes of the syllabus.
2. The course content is well-prepared and can effectively train students' critical thinking, presentation, and Q&A skills.
3. In-class activities are well-designed and promote positive classroom atmosphere.
4. The teacher frequently collects relevant teaching resources.
5. The teacher creates a positive learning atmosphere to motivate English learning in class.
6. The teacher provides clear, concrete and systematic explanations on the course content.
7. The teacher interacts frequently with students.
8. The teacher manages the class time effectively.
9. The teacher frequently uses methods of discussion and Q&A.
10. The teacher gives appropriate assignments and assessments.
11. The course material is level-appropriate, valuing students' affective learning.
12. The teacher uses teaching platform and integrates course materials appropriately.
13. Overall, my English listening skill has improved from taking the course this semester.
14. Overall, my English speaking skill has improved from taking the course this semester.
15. Overall, my English reading skill has improved from taking the course this semester.
16. Overall, my English writing skill has improved from taking the course this semester.

Appendix 2 Achievement Survey **(Tsou, W. & Chen, F., 2014 : 45)**

State your opinion towards these statements by using 1-5 scale. 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (not sure), 4 (agree), or 5 (strongly agree).

1. ESP materials are authentic and helpful
2. ESP tasks are authentic and helpful
3. Learner autonomy is an important learning goal
4. Corpus instruction is helpful to independent learning
5. ESP should conduct placement test
6. ESP is helpful in TOEIC improvement
7. Improved reading
8. Improved vocabulary
9. Improved speaking
10. Improved presentation
11. Improved listening
12. ESP reading skills are helpful for future academic studies and workplace.
13. ESP speaking skills are helpful for future academic studies and workplace.
14. ESP reading skills on textbook reading.
15. ESP speaking skills in subject classrooms.

Appendix 3 Teacher Questionnaire on ESP program evaluation **(Tsou, W. & Chen, F., 2014 : 52)**

The following questions help the TNU ESP office evaluate the effectiveness of the ESP program. Please take a moment and write down your thoughts, opinions, and suggestions.

1. Do you think the teaching materials in our sophomore ESP classes are authentic? What students read in ESP is not mainstream textbook materials but reproduced and adapted for ESP. Do you think these adequately reflect what students need to read in their academic studies and professions?
2. Do you think the learning tasks in ESP are authentic? Are they the type of tasks which students need to perform in their academic classes and future jobs?
3. Are you aware that learner autonomy is one of the learning objectives in ESP? This objective exists because, for most students, the sophomore ESP classes are their last formal training they will receive in their education.
4. Do you think the introduction of corpus or other language learning tools have helped students become more independent to learn English on their own after the ESP class?
5. Do you think a placement test should take place so that students of ESP are divided into different classes based on proficiency? Does the mixing of students with various levels of proficiency create a problem in your instructions?
6. What assessment methods do you use in addition to written tests? Do you think your task-based tests are authentic in that they are the type of tasks students will perform in their subject classes or future jobs?
7. Do you think the learning outcomes in ESP should reflect on improvement in TOEIC? Should there be a correlation?
8. Have students transferred what they learned in ESP to their subject academic courses? Have you heard comments from students regarding this? If yes, what skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are transferred?
9. Do you feel you play a participatory role in the program and the course development process? Do you feel supported and your opinions heard? Do you feel a sense of accomplishments from teaching in the program? Are you growing as a teacher?
10. It's a fact that teachers are regularly evaluated by both program administration and students. Do you feel empowered by the process, in that you gain valuable information to become a better teacher as a result? Or, do you think teachers inadvertently are victimized because the supervisors and students often fail to recognize the efforts made by teachers?